

TITLE
METHOD FOR DOCUMENT VIEWING

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention is related to methods in which a client queries a document server in preparation for document transfer and, more particularly, to those methods which request document servers to transfer specified documents to the client in a particular format prior to individual client-side viewing.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In the arts, many client-side devices communicate with a server either through a direct connection such as a phone line or a cable or via a remote connection, such that the end-user (operating the client-side device) can retrieve email, documents, pictures, and other text or pictures made available to the client by the server. Depending on the type or kind of connection the user has made with the server device, the transfer of documents from the server to the client can be relatively quick in those instances wherein the client is connected to the server through a high bandwidth connection, or can be painstakingly slow if, for example, the client is connected to the server through a low bandwidth connection. The server merely receives the request from the client device and then retrieves the desired pages or other documents or pictures and routinely queues them up for transfer to the requesting client. Depending on the bandwidth of the client-server communication pathway, the transfer of documents from a server to a remote client can take quite a long time which increases, for example, the risk of having the connection-link severed during the extended transmission time frame or leads to a poor user experience.

Today, many client-side devices are handheld devices, as illustrated in Figure 1, with relatively small viewing screens for displaying documents. (All trademarks are owned by their respective organizations.) Users can connect to a server via a wireless protocol and request work-related documents and email for viewing while away from the office. Since many of these small handheld devices have very limited internal size, they routinely lack sufficient memory and/or storage room to hold all of the requested documents or document applications/viewers at any one moment in time. In addition, such handheld client-side devices can be limited in the processing power needed to convert such documents for display on the limited real estate of the handheld device's viewing screen.

As such, one of the problems in the art of client-side document viewing involves the combination of accessing remote documents over a low bandwidth connection using a client-side device with relatively limited screen real estate, coupled with insufficient internal memory to store a large set of retrieved documents and document applications, and often lacking adequate computing power to convert such documents on-the-fly into another format for faster displaying on the user's viewing screen. Current solutions often restrict the amounts and/or types of documents that can be viewed (e.g. web pages with GIF files) by such remote handheld document viewing devices. What is needed in the arts is a method by which a low-bandwidth client-side device can request from a remote server documents in a certain format.

What is needed in the arts is a method by which such a client-side handheld device can take advantage of the often considerable computing power of the server to convert requested documents into a format with compression in order to speed up transmission times while gaining the benefit of having a smaller document (in terms of total bytes) to manipulate client-side prior to displaying on the limited real estate screen for the user.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

What is disclosed is a method by which a client-side handheld device requests a server to convert server-side documents into a compression format prior to transmission of said documents to the client. The server retrieves and converts the requested documents to a raster image that is then compressed according to attributes based on information received from the client device in the initial document request. Instead of having to manipulate multiple formats which the original documents are in and supported by the server, the client-side device is preferably optimized in hardware and/or software to support and otherwise take advantage of the requested compression format. The compressed document is then delivered to the client device, in whole or in part, selectively or progressively over time per individual requests prior to displaying the received data to the end-user. Depending on the requested delivery mode, server-side documents are preferably compressed using wavelet compression methods, such as the JPEG 2000 standard, known in the arts. Through such a compression format, documents of sizes (in total bytes) exceeding one or more Megabytes can be compressed down to as small as 30 kilobytes or less.

More specifically, the method of the present invention involves the first step of a client side device requesting a document or a portion of a document from a server and the server receiving said request. Secondly, the server retrieves the requested document portion and converts said portion to a wavelet compressed image. The server sends packets of data from the wavelet compressed page image to the client. The client receives the compressed data; decompresses it and displays the decompressed document for the user. The client makes subsequent requests for more data which the server responds to using the wavelet compressed image data for the document. All these requests and responses use a protocol appropriate to document viewing and the features of the wavelet compression. In the preferred embodiment, wavelet compression uses the JPEG 2000 standard.

Advantages of the present invention include providing a viable method for a simple, lightweight universal document viewer that provides the user with improved end-to-end system responsiveness (low latency) when viewing documents. Other objects, advantages, and salient features of the invention will become apparent from the detailed description which, taken in conjunction with the drawings, disclose the preferred embodiments of the invention.

Additional benefits and advantages of the present invention will be set forth in the description which follows, and in part will be made obvious from the description, or may be learned by the practice of this invention. The advantages of this invention, as described herein, may be realized and otherwise obtained by means particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the appended claims, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and detailed specification.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The preferred embodiments and other aspects of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of the invention when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings which are provided for the purpose of describing embodiments of the invention and not for limiting same, in which:

Figure 1 is an illustration of one such client-side hand held device known in the arts;

Figure 2 illustrates the hand held device of Figure 1 displaying a combination of text and graphics with a portion thereof having been selected by the user;

Figure 3 shows the portion of the text of Figure 2, selected by the user being displayed with a subset of that text again being specifically selected; and

Figure 4 shows the selected text of Figure 3 displayed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

What is disclosed is a method by which a client-side handheld device requests server-side documents from a server which the server converts into a compression format prior to transmission of said documents to the client. The server retrieves and converts the requested documents, if they have not been previously converted, to a raster image that is then compressed according to attributes based on information received from the client device in the initial document request. Instead of the having to manipulate multiple formats which the original documents are in and supported by the server, the client-side device is preferably optimized in hardware and/or software to support and otherwise take advantage of the requested compression format. The compressed document is then delivered to the client device, in whole or in part, selectively or progressively over time per individual requests prior to displaying the received data to the end-user. Depending on the requested delivery mode, server-side documents are preferably compressed using a wavelet compression method, such as the JPEG 2000 standard, known in the arts. Through such a compression format, documents of sizes (in total bytes) exceeding one or more Megs can be compressed down to as small as 30 kilobytes or less. The method of the present invention involves the first step of a client side device requesting a document from a server in a particular compression format and the server receiving said request. Secondly, the server retrieves the requested document portion and converts said portion to a JPEG 2000 compressed image. The server sends as much of the JPEG 2000 compressed page image data to the client as is needed to satisfy the client request. The client receives the compressed data; decompresses it and displays the decompressed document for the user. The client makes subsequent requests for more data which the server responds to using the JPEG 2000 compressed image data. All these requests and responses use a protocol appropriate to document viewing and the features of the JPEG 2000 compression.

A user has a handheld device, as shown in Figure 1, with limited screen or viewing real estate (in many instances, these handheld devices also have limited internal memory and computing power) and the user wishes to view some of his or her documents residing on a server in a remote location. For example, the user may want to look up something specific in a particular document, or verify that they have the correct document before printing, faxing or e-mailing it onward. The viewing device has limited memory, and lacks the computing power necessary to render on-the-fly documents from one format to another prior to viewing. Handheld devices have little screen real estate and typically operate over a relatively low bandwidth connection. The end-user would first download the entire document then open, reformat, rasterize, zoom, scroll and pan--all the operations you normally perform on a desktop system with a regular-size monitor. However, these operations typically don't map well to the small screens of a handheld device.

Preferably, the client-side device is optimized in hardware and/or software to support and otherwise take advantage of a particular compression format such that the handheld device is merely an image viewer and, in particular, a wavelet-based image viewer, preferably one compliant with the JPEG 2000 standard.

The JPEG 2000 code stream is organized into packets whose ordering represents one of multiple possible different groupings of the compressed data structures. This means that as more packets are received and decompressed, more of the image can be viewed. The particular grouping determines how the image progresses, by spatial resolution and by quality (bit resolution) being the two main progressive modes. In addition, region-of-interest coding can be used for that some of portions of the page image appear with higher quality before other parts of the page image. In addition compressed image data can be tiled, so that rectangular subsets of the compressed image can be accessed independently of other subsets. There are other benefits to using the preferred JPEG 2000 standard.

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When the user requests a document using the user-interface (UI) on the handheld client, as shown in Figure 1, the client device makes a request to the server on which the document resides. The server retrieves the document and converts each page to a JPEG 2000-compressed image. All pages can be converted, or just the page needed to satisfy the initial request, or the page requested along with the pages preceding and following it. Additional strategies are envisioned herein. The page images may also be cached or pre-computed. The server then responds to the client request with an initial image, typically a high decomposition level, low resolution image in a JPEG 2000 code stream or a low quality image (most significant layers in a JPEG 2000 code stream) of the requested page. The initial image would usually be in color, but a gray-only image could be initially sent. In the preferred embodiment, the client receives the decompressed data and then decompresses and displays it as shown in Figure 2. In some circumstances, the size of the received compressed image (in bytes) may be larger than the size of the image (in bytes) that is to be rendered on the display. In such instances the server can decompress, compute and send a portion or segment of the image to be displayed to the client device. Depending on transmission and decompression times, the user may be able to stop the progressive rendering of the document image on the display by deciding that they have seen enough and that further transmission or decompression will not provide any more useful data.

After the initial view, the user can then request more data from the current page image--more resolution, in effect zooming in; more quality to refine the viewed image; or full color--or the user can request another page. As shown in Figure 2, the user could also select a region of the page image, identify that region in a request to the server and then receive from the server the data that is needed to provide a higher resolution view of that region. In other words, the server sends data for only a portion of the image. All these requests would be satisfied by the server providing the appropriate packets from the JPEG 2000-compressed version of the page image that resides on

the server. Figure 3 shows another page of the same document in Figure 2; and Figure 4 shows the resulting displays when the user zooms in on a portion of a page. Note that the zooming is satisfied by additional data, namely resolution levels, in combination with data previously received. After all
5 resolution levels have been received, then subsequent zooming would interpolate the received data.

Since the JPEG 2000 standard supports ROI (Region-of-Interest) coding, some portions of an image can be compressed with more fidelity and higher resolution. In addition, certain regional packets for selected portions of
10 the image can be manipulated in the codestream prior to transmission such that they occur earlier in the codestream and thus are delivered before the arrival of packets for other regions of the image. JPEG 2000 ROI coding can be used in the initial image that the server delivers to the client so that the image bits initially received show more detail in the areas of the page that are
15 determined to be more interesting or significant. The ROI can be defined in several ways: predefined for each page of the document (the ROI or the rules for defining it are predefined), determined from an analysis of the page when the JPEG 2000 image is created, or in response to an attribute in the client request, e.g. "I'm interested in the text more than the images."

20 Aside from different progressive modes realized by reordering the packets in an existing JPEG 2000 codestream, the present invention preferably would be supported by a client-server communication protocol which supports requests for more resolution, more quality, more color or gray, and others. (Note: this protocol could be modeled on the Internet Imaging
25 Protocol (IIP), Version 1.0.5, but I want to be careful not to make a statement here that could be construed as inferring or suggesting that any patents or intellectual property on IIP would also apply to this invention.) The protocol preferably would support attributes that determine how the page image is compressed, e.g. to support progressive-by-resolution transmission and
30 display. Also, the page image may be compressed so that the highest decomposition level (lowest resolution) corresponds to the display size of the

requesting client. Because of the packet nature of the JPEG 2000
codestream, the client can also request an image of a specified size in kilobits,
either to set the transmission time or to accommodate some memory
constraints.

5 In summary, what is disclosed are embodiments of a method by which
client-side handheld device can take advantage of the computing power of the
server to convert requested documents, or portions thereof, into a wavelet
compression format in order to speed up transmission times while gaining the
benefit of having a smaller document (in terms of total bytes) to manipulate
10 client-side prior to displaying on the limited real estate screen of the user's
client-side handheld device.

While the invention is described with reference to a particular
embodiment, this particular embodiment is intended to be illustrative, not
limiting. Various modifications may be made without departing from the spirit
15 and scope of the invention as defined in the amended claims. Modifications
and alterations will occur to others upon reading and understanding this
specification; therefore, it is intended that all such modifications and alterations
are included insofar as they come within the scope of the appended claims or
equivalents thereof.